

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0006] of the published application with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention generally provides a spinal rod approximator device for moving a spinal rod into the rod-receiving member of a spinal implant. In one embodiment, the device includes an implant-gripping member having a distal portion that extends in a direction substantially transverse to a proximal portion, and that is adapted to engage the rod-receiving member of a spinal implant. A rod-engaging member is slidably coupled to the implant-gripping member at a position proximal to the implant-gripping member, and the rod-engaging member includes a distal portion that extends transverse to a proximal portion. The device further includes a pusher member coupled to at least one of the implant-gripping member and the rod-engaging member such the pusher member is effective to move at least one of the implant-gripping member and the rod-engaging member with respect to one another.

Please replace paragraph [0037] of the published application with the following amended paragraph:

In another embodiment of the present invention, the spinal rod approximator can include a release mechanism that is effective to release the threaded engagement between the pusher member and the rod-engaging member. This allows the rod-engaging member to ~~slid~~ slide freely along the sliding axis, thereby providing the surgeon with a device that is easier to use, and more particularly it provides the surgeon with more control over the position of the rod-engaging member. By way of non-limiting example, FIGS. 6A-6B illustrate a spinal rod approximator 100 that includes an exemplary embodiment of such a release mechanism. Like reference numbers are used to refer to corresponding parts.